

# *A Celebration of Life*



*In Loving Memory of  
Rev. Bruce E. Billman  
April 4, 1934 – March 1, 2021*



where in our blood and bones  
the body of God dwells.

This is such a place, where God and Goddess;  
Bruce and the Great Cloud of Witnesses  
unite in this celebration we share together;  
a celebration of gratitude and love  
as we remember friend and rascal  
The Rev. Bruce E. Billman. Amen.

Joseph G. Gilmore, adapt.

\*Hymn

Bring Many Names

WESTCHASE

1.) Bring many names, beautiful and good,  
celebrate in parable and story, holiness and glory,  
living, loving God.

Hail and Hosanna! Bring many names.

2.) Strong Guardian God, working night and day,  
planning all the wonders of creation  
setting each equation, genius at play:  
Hail and Hosanna, strong Guardian God.

3.) Ever growing God, eager on the move,  
saying no to false hood and unkindness,  
crying out for justice, giving all you have:  
Hail and Hosanna, ever growing God.

4.) Great, living God, never fully known,  
joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,  
closer yet than breathing,  
every lasting home:  
Hail and Hosanna, great living God.

Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James and John up on a high mountain to be alone with them. And before their eyes, Jesus was transfigured—his face becoming as dazzling as the sun and his clothes as radiant as light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with Jesus. Then Peter said, “Rabbi, how good that we are here! With your permission I will erect three shelters here—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah!” Peter was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them. Out of the cloud came a voice which said, “This is my Own, my Beloved, on whom my favor rests. Listen to this One!” When they heard this, the disciples fell forward on the ground, overcome with fear. Jesus came toward them and touched them, saying, “Get up! Don’t be afraid.” When they looked up, they did not see anyone but Jesus.

Proclamation of the Good News!

The Rev. Dr. Jane Adams Spahr  
The Rev. Lisa L. Larges  
The Rev. Raymond J. Bagnuolo

Musical Reflection All God’s Children Got a Place in the Choir

Bill Staines

**Refrain: All God’s critters got a place in the choir  
Some sing low, some sing higher  
Some sing out loud on the telephone wire  
And some just clap their hands, or paws or anything they got now**

Listen to the bass, it’s the one on the bottom  
Where the bullfrog croaks and the hippopotamus  
Moans and groans with a big to do  
And old cow just goes ‘moo’

Well the dogs and the cats they take up the middle  
The honeybee hums and the crickets fiddle  
The donkey brays and the pony neighs  
The old coyote howls [Refrain]

Listen to the top where the little bird sings  
The melody with the high voice ringing

The hoot owl hollers over everything  
And the jaybird disagrees

Singing in the nighttime, singing in the day  
The little duck quacks and he's on his way  
The 'possum don't have much to say  
And the porcupine talks to herself.

Everybody here is a part of the plan  
We all get to play in the great critter band  
From the eagle in the sky to the whale in the sea  
It's one great symphony. [Refrain]

Remembrances from Family and Friends

Rev. Tiberi

Reading

"How Calmly Does the Olive Branch"  
Nonno's poem from "Night of the Iguana" by Tennessee Williams

Jim Tiefertal

How calmly does the olive branch  
Observe the sky begin to blanch  
Without a cry, without a prayer,  
With no betrayal of despair.

Sometime while night obscures the tree  
the zenith of its life will be  
Gone past forever,  
and from thence  
A second history will commence.

A chronicle no longer gold,  
A bargaining with mist and mold,  
And finally the broken stem  
The plummeting to earth, and then

An intercourse not well designed  
For beings of a golden kind  
Whose native green must arch above  
The earth's obscene corrupting love.

And still the ripe fruit and the branch  
Observe the sky begin to blanch  
Without a cry, without a prayer,  
With no betrayal of despair.

O courage! Could you not as well  
Select a second place to dwell,  
Not only in that golden tree  
But in the frightened heart of me?

Pastoral Prayer  
The Prayer of Jesus (unison)

Rev. Bagnuolo  
Rev. Spahr

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Parent, Guardian Guide of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope  
and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and forever. Amen.

*from The New Zealand Prayer Book*

Prayer of Commendation

Rev. Spahr

Already resurrected into your eternal embrace,  
we commend our friend and loved one;  
your faithful and courageous servant  
The Rev. Bruce E. Billman.

We ask that you receive our gay sibling  
and his beacon of light into your Light;

Into your Great Mystery, we release Bruce:  
the one you created to be  
boundary breaker  
and justice maker...

and yes, Love-maker (especially this),  
sent to touch others with your  
kindness and love - in his exceptional way.

Gracious Embracing God, it is  
with gratitude and a reluctance to say good-bye,  
that we echo a resounding joy for his return home.  
We lift up Bruce, our rascally loved one, to you.

May you may send him into this world again  
(in the ways you will),  
and may we follow his love of you  
with a heart such as his. Amen.

Hymn

I've Got Peace Like a River

Negro Spiritual

1.) I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river,  
I've got peace like a river in-a my soul. (2X)

2.) I've got joy like a fountain. . .

3.) I've got love like an ocean. . .

Benediction

Rev. Tiberi

Postlude

Over the Rainbow

Arlen and Harburg

Passing of the Peace

Rev. Larges

We ask that any donations you might wish to make in honor of Bruce, be sent to [www.transheartline.org](http://www.transheartline.org), That All May Freely Serve's affiliate and successor organization for donation purposes. Wherever you may share your gifts in honor of our friend, thank you for doing so.



### **Participants in the Service**

The Rev. Dr. Laurie Tiberi, Interim Pastor  
The Rev. Dr. Jane Adams Spahr, The Rev. Lisa L. Larges,  
The Rev. Raymond J. Bagnuolo, Guest Officiants  
Ralph Carter, Sandy Morales, and Jim Tiefenthal, Readers  
Dr. Lee S. Wright, Director of Music Ministry  
Alan Jones, Associate Musician

